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PERSEVERANCE;

OR

WALTER

AND

HIS LITTLE SCHOOL,

BY

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH,

AUTHOR OF "GERIC," "OF SADQC," "IZRAN,"

AND, &c.

PUBLISHED BY JAMES NISBET,

At his Select Theological Circulating Library,

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1826.

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WALTER AND HIS LITTLE SCHOOL.

BY

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH,

AUTHOR OF "OSRIC," "ZADOC," "IZRAM,"
&c. &c.

The quality of mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven
Upon the earth beneath. It is twice blessed ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

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R. M. Tims, and W. Curry, and Co. Dublin.

1826.

TO

LADY D'URBAN,

UNDER WHOSE PATRONAGE AND AUSPICES

THE WORK OF EDUCATION HAS SO HAPPILY PROSPERED,

IN

THE ISLANDS OF ANTIGUA, MONTSERRAT,
AND DEMERARA,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF AFFECTIONATE RESPECT

AND GRATITUDE,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



PERSEVERANCE;

OR,

WALTER AND HIS LITTLE SCHOOL.



THE oppressive heat of the day had subsided, and a refreshing breeze gradually cooled the soil, parched by such powerful rays as are unknown in our temperate climate. Mr. Shirley, a wealthy planter in one of our West India islands, accompanied by his family, now ventured forth from the apartments where they had reposed all day in listless languor. Shaded by large hats, and fanned by female slaves, they reclined on rustic chairs under the plantain trees, and watched the distant movements of the



negroes, who were leaving the sugar plantation, and proceeding in close bodies to their huts. Many birds of brilliant plumage fluttered among the tall branches, now and then pouring forth their various notes, from the shrill tuneless scream of the paroquet, to the mellow and varied harmony of the mocking-bird—the nightingale of the South American woods. The air was perfumed with spices, over which the breeze passed; and while the most delicious fruits lay heaped before the party, every sense found its gratification.

Mr. Shirley was an Englishman, but long settled in the West Indies; he had married a creole, or native, lady; and her sister, a widow, resided with them. The two sons of the latter had just returned from England, where they had passed five years. Joseph was fourteen, and Henry about a year younger. They were fine boys, and

in danger of becoming vain of the improvements made in their person and manners; for their mother continually noticed them in their presence—a very dangerous habit, in which too many indulge. Older people cannot be too cautious in the remarks they make before children: indiscriminate praise is injudicious; flattering is mean and cruel; to extol a child for personal beauty is to lay a foundation of vanity, and neglect of what is far more important, the cultivation of the mind: to censure for natural deformity, or defect, is to nurture an envious discontented spirit. Exclaiming upon the elegance of a young person's manner is an inducement to foppery, conceit, and affectation; while severe observations on the want of it, often drive their object beyond the hope of improvement, confirming a careless, clownish, and dogged habit, which might have been softened by gentle reproof and occasional

encouragement. When children hear themselves thus made the subject of remark, they should always remember that man can but judge after the outward appearance, while the Lord looketh upon the heart; and, feeling this, they should secretly pray for grace to profit by what is spoken, recollecting that the most beautiful person must in a few years lose all its attractions, the most graceful manner sink into the decrepitude of age, and the brightest wit be lost in the weakness of second childhood, unless the soul be earlier summoned before the judgment-seat, to give account, not of the former appearance of the body, then mouldering in the grave, but of what things were done in that body; not merely to say what degree of talent was possessed, but to deliver up proof of having dedicated it to the glory of God, and the real benefit of man. A few such reflections would, with the divine bless-

ing, arm young people against the dangerous effect of remarks which their elders are not always considerate enough to refrain from making in their presence.

Mr. Shirley had also two sons, who were both absent from the little party assembled under the plantains; William roving in quest of mischief, which was too much his delight, and Walter far better employed, as the sequel will shew.

Joseph Neville was a boy of kind and benevolent feelings, which, however, often hurried him beyond the bounds of prudence, and thus led him to injure those whom he wished to serve, by provoking opposition. His brother Henry was a shrewd, clever boy, but unfortunately set up for a wit; and ever on the watch for opportunities to say what he called "a good thing," cared not whose feelings he wounded, nor whose interests he sacrificed, so that he might maintain this

character, which is rarely amiable, and never respectable: a person who condescends to be the fiddle of every company, must be content with a fiddle's fate; that is, to be hung up or laid aside when any thing more important or more profitable is introduced.

Henry often amused himself at his brother's expense, exposing to ridicule his more tender feelings, and irritating him into the expression of resentment quite inconsistent with a truly benevolent character: they had frequent quarrels, in which the cool sneering manner of Henry generally brought him off victorious, often putting Joseph into a violent passion. Placed in a great school, where none watched over their private characters, and where their disputes were matter of merriment to the boys around them, they were in danger of growing up with the feelings of enmity, rather than brotherly love reigning in their hearts; for while Henry

teased Joseph beyond his patience, the latter would say things that bitterly mortified the aggressor, though he seldom allowed it to appear: and it became their habitual plan to display each other's characters in the most unfavourable light.

Mr. Shirley was a man of discernment, and soon discovered the faults of his nephews, whom he exerted himself to amuse and interest. "Observe," said he, "how picturesque those parties of Blacks appear at this distance, who, on a nearer view, would not be so pleasing to eyes accustomed of late to the fair skins of England."

"They look," remarked Henry, "like a swarm of locusts, described in the Bible." His mother laughed; but Joseph added, "At any rate they do not come here to devour the fruits of the earth, but to cultivate them for our benefit."

"Right," said Mr. Shirley; "the pro-

duce of these lands would be little worth, had we not their assistance: I am glad to hear Joseph discriminate so justly."

Henry never liked to hear his brother commended for checking him; he therefore proceeded: "Oh, Sir, you must never speak with disrespect of a negro before Joseph; he is primed and loaded with arguments to prove them some degrees better than ourselves. A black skin, woolly hair, great goggle eyes, with whites like the inside of an oyster shell, a pug nose, and a wide grinning mouth, these, Uncle, are the marks of superior intellect, and a capacity to govern their fellow-men."

"Brother, how *can* you talk so!" exclaimed Joseph, with a glance of distress towards the negro servants present. Mr. Shirley also appeared much displeased, and gravely said, "Providence has given us dominion over the negroes, for our advantage

and their own ; but we are not therefore to treat with ridicule the natural peculiarities by which they are distinguished from ourselves."

Joseph's compassionate disposition had been strongly excited, while in England, in behalf of the poor negroes ; he had warmly entered into the plans of benevolent persons for ameliorating their condition ; and Henry expected much amusement from his unavailing efforts when they should arrive in the West : he now persisted in urging the subject, which could not but tend to make Mr. Shirley feel a coldness towards his nephew, whose opinions and wishes were thus extravagantly burlesqued. He therefore went on. " How is it possible, Uncle, that the blacks can find any advantage in being under our sway ? you will never persuade Joseph of that."

" Perhaps Joseph may find some one nearer his own age, who will argue the point

with him better than I could," answered Mr. Shirley, "and one whose benevolence is as unbounded as his own can be. To him I shall leave the task."

Joseph said nothing, for he was of a timid disposition ; but he secretly resolved not to be convinced, by any arguments, that the horrors of a slave ship could possibly prove an introduction to any sort of blessing or advantage, among the poor victims of such misfortune : or that to be born in a plantation, and numbered among the chattels of its owner, with a liability to be disposed of at his pleasure, and a life of compulsory labour from the earliest period, could admit even of solace. Joseph considered not Him whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil ; and who, while he permits some men to walk in their own ways, suffers no power, earthly or infernal, to baffle the purposes of his mercy towards his chosen. The Lord knoweth

them that are his: he will gather them from the four quarters of the world, he will bring them by a way that they know not; he will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. The wrath of man shall praise him: He will work, and who shall let it?

Joseph had none of these comforting reflections: he therefore remained rather sullenly silent; and Mr. Shirley, as he watched his looks, felt somewhat dissatisfied.

A shout of merry little voices was now heard at some distance: the boys looked in the direction from whence it came; and Mr. Shirley, rising, said, "As you appear so much interested on this topic, come with me, I will shew you that even slavery has its joys."

"Ah, Joseph!" exclaimed the mischievous Henry, "What a fine subject for your next poem, 'The Joys of Slavery!'"

"Is Joseph a poet?"

"Oh, Uncle! the doleful ditties he has penned, would draw tears from the handle of a whip—of a driver's whip."

"There are tears enough on it already," muttered Joseph, irritated by his brother's jests.

"Come, come, my good boys," said their Uncle, no disputing. I am aware how high party feelings run in England at this time; but, Joseph, suspend your opinion until you have opportunity to judge for yourself; and you, Henry, I entreat you, curb a tendency that may make you many a foe, and estrange your dearest friends. Sarcasm is a dangerous plaything."

By this time they had reached a spot from whence they could witness the passing scene without being perceived. A groupe of negro children, neatly clad, and whose countenances expressed the most eager feel-

ing of expectation, occupied a slightly rising ground ; while all their little heads, crowded together, were poked in one direction, as if watching the approach of some object.

“ Dey hab no leave de door yet,” said one, as he withdrew his face a little from the mass of sable visages.

The party was now joined by another urchin, who ran breathless towards them, screaming out in a tone of joy, “ See, me hab de bead !” and producing a small string of blue glass beads. “ Me hab de bird-nest !” cried another, more proudly, displaying a long nest taken from a tree, on which it was suspended by the feathered architect. Each had some treasure to shew ; and very eagerly did they compare stores. The two young gentlemen were anxious to know the meaning of this scene, but their Uncle still motioned them to silence.

A sound came from the direction in which the heads had been turned, and an exulting cry of "Here dey *do* come!" was followed by a general rush of the whole party towards the same point.

"They are gone," said Mr. Shirley, "to meet a few of their fellows who have just left school, and enjoy together their hour of sport."

"But what are they going to do with all the odd things they have collected, Sir."

"I really do not know; but if you wait here a few moments, all will return together, on their way to the huts."

They shortly appeared; and a most animating view it was. About ten children, of ages from eight to twelve, had joined the former party; they carried in their looks an air of no small importance, while their little friends pressed around, forcing on them the presents they had prepared, with a general

cry of, "Teachee me, do dear, me hab de cocoa, me hab de bead," and clamouring most lustily their request of "Teachee me de book."

On the rising ground the learned ones paused, and proceeded to examine the bribes tendered to their acceptance; all but two, who, without any hesitation, sat down and busily commenced instructing two others from their little books. Several more, as the bargains proceeded, joined them, with the successful candidates for instruction; and the hum of b, a, ba; b, e, be; was heard at intervals, through the shrill notes of the anxious pleaders.

One interesting little girl, about nine years old, made her petition, with great timidity, to a tall lass, who, viewing disdainfully the trifle tendered to her, told the applicant that she could not sell her learning so cheap. "But, Hannah, me hab no better ting: me

moder floggee yesterday, she sad, no gib me noting: me look all de fields, me catchee bird, he get way, den me cry; and me hab no but dis small cake; do teachee me," and she hung imploringly on the obdurate scholar, who roughly replied, "I wont, den; you go comfort your floggee moder; what for you learn book?"

"To comfort my moder wid good word out of good book. God he give good book, me learn read it."

At this moment a better bribe caught the eye of Hannah, and she went off to examine it; but, finally, after much bargaining, rejected this also, and walked away towards her own home, without imparting any of her acquired knowledge. The little girl whom she had at first repulsed, sitting still on the ground, crying bitterly, until one of the scholars, taking pity on her, permitted her to share the instruction she was giving to ano-

ther. After contemplating the scene a little longer, Mr. Shirley led his nephews away from the spot, and proceeded thoughtfully along, until Joseph said, "What an entertaining sight it was! how anxious the poor little things were to learn!"

"I confess it surprised me," replied his Uncle. "When Walter persuaded me to establish this little school, for a small number, and merely in the way of experiment, I certainly did not suppose the advantage would be so coveted by the children. They are an indolent race, but the novelty of the thing attracts them, no doubt."

"Is cousin Walter an abolitionist?" asked Henry, "No, Sir," answered his Uncle with some asperity, "but he is a humane, amiable boy, always studying the happiness of those around him, and promoting it in every way. Come, Joseph, we will visit him in the school-room, and make our report of

Hannah, whose conduct shews her undeserving of the privileges she enjoys."

They entered a hut, slightly built, but most commodiously fitted up, where an elderly woman of colour was employed in removing the little benches, while Walter busily examined some books, and marked out the intended lessons of the future day. A look of surprise, not quite unmixed with alarm, on his father's entrance, gave way to one of unaffected delight, when Mr. Shirley, patting his head, said, "Good Boy, an industrious lad will never become a worthless man."

"Why cousin Walter," said the incorrigible Henry, "are you at the head of the black college?"—"Yes, Henry, I am President of the College, and Martha Cook here is professor of all the sciences taught in it."

"I am come to lodge a complaint against one of your students," said Mr. Shirley, and Walter looked alarmed. Henry, before his

Uncle could proceed, with great humour repeated the particulars of what they had witnessed, mimicking the language and gestures of the poor little Africans, and giving full effect to the recital of Hannah's obduracy, concluding with the remark, "They drove their bargains so hard, and made so much of their merchandize, that I think if they had the selling of themselves, Uncle would not have got them so cheap."

So unfeelingly can some minds jest on the heaviest misfortunes of their fellow creatures ! "What say you, Walter ?" asked his father. "I don't know, Sir ; I am very sorry to hear such an account of Hannah ; great pains have been taken with her."

"Yes, Sir," added Martha, "and she is clever, but proud and mercenary."

"She shall be expelled the school immediately," said Mr. Shirley ; and Walter

quietly, though evidently with much pain, prepared to strike her name off the list.

His father watched him attentively; then proceeded. "And now, Walter, ascertain the name of the little girl whose praiseworthy wish for instruction was disappointed, and let her be admitted, and"—he paused, walked towards the door, returned, and said—"and, my boy, make out also who among the children are most truly solicitous to learn, and receive as many as Martha can conveniently instruct; and, Walter, reward the two who sat down to teach without waiting to be bribed." He walked hastily away. Walter looked after him, his eyes filled with tears of wonder and of joy. In secret thankfulness he lifted his heart to the Hearer of prayer; and then consulted with Martha how best to carry the benevolent designs of Mr. Shirley into effect.

Having introduced both the school and its

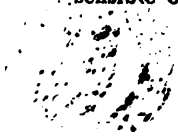
young founder to my reader's acquaintance, I proceed to give some account of the boy whose works shewed the nature of his character. He was Mr. Shirley's youngest son, the elder, William, was of a haughty, fierce, tyrannical disposition, the terror and the torment of his attendants, even in the nursery; and dreaded by every slave on the plantation. Walter, on the contrary, was of a delicate constitution, and in temper quite the reverse of his brother. He had great vivacity, and was giddy and thoughtless to a degree, frequently occasioning as much mischief by his want of reflection, as his brother did by his ungovernable passion, until about eighteen months before these events happened, when their only sister died; she had not long returned from England, where she had imbibed lessons of the purest benevolence, founded on a renewed spirit, the spirit of love, whose language is that of the

angels, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Had she been spared, it is probable she would have proved a blessing to all around her; called, however, to her rest, before she could make any attempt at effecting her pious and humane plans, she employed every permitted hour in seeking to impress her brothers with the feelings that animated and supported her own soul. William shunned her; a sick room had no charms for his turbulent temper; but Walter listened with avidity to her teaching, and received from on high the same spirit that had aroused Maria to so anxious a concern for the best interests of herself and others. From this time he became the almost inseparable companion of his dying sister, and she confided to him the object of her great solicitude, the spiritual welfare of the hundreds who were under her father's authority. "You know," she said,

that Papa is truly benevolent; but then he is attached to old opinions and old customs; he studies the personal comfort of his slaves, but I cannot think that he reckons them in the same scale of immortal beings with himself, or supposes they need the like preparation for a future world. He also dreads every kind of innovation, as most of us do; and is over-cautious in what might lead to it. Above all, he is very tenacious of his authority, and will not endure the appearance of being taught his duty. You will have an arduous task, d'ear Walter, but I shall die in the hope that you will have strength to fulfil it."

"Alas! sister," replied the boy, "I fear it is quite beyond my strength. Consider, I am the youngest of the family, and possess no influence; I am not only weak and ignorant, but idle and trifling; when I get about a good thing, I seldom persevere in it; and a cross word disheartens me in a moment."

"All this," said Maria, "does not discourage me. Your being so young will give you more influence, because it will not admit the appearance of wishing to dictate. The feeling of your own weakness and ignorance will lead you more continually to the fountain of wisdom and strength ; remember, our sufficiency is of God, and we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us ; remember that the Author of heavenly wisdom giveth to all who ask it liberally, and upbraideth not. And, oh, my brother, you cannot be idle or unfruitful in this work, if you habitually consider that in every negro slave you look upon you behold a candidate for immortality, one whom you must meet at the bar of judgment, either to testify against your cruel neglect of his soul, or to be to you a crown of rejoicing. It makes me very happy, dear Walter, to see you so sensible of your particular faults ; and the



tears that are stealing from your eyes delight me more than ever did your merriest gambols in infancy, or your heartiest laugh in the days of unthinking folly."

Maria did not live long after this conversation; Walter was with her when she expired. Long after weakness had deprived her of the power of utterance, when turning her languid eyes towards the door of her apartment, she there saw a poor old negro servant, looking in, and weeping bitterly. With a sudden effort of strength she grasped her brother's hand, pointed it in that direction, distinctly uttered the word "Remember," and raising her eyes with a smile of joy and hope, expired.

From this time a remarkable change took place in Walter: he became so serious and silent, so different from his former self, that his parents would have been alarmed, had not a ready explanation been suggested by



themselves, while they recalled his fondness for the departed ; and such sensibility, on an occasion so deeply afflictive to them, greatly endeared the affectionate boy ; while the unfeeling conduct of William, who could scarcely be restrained from his noisy amusements till the corpse was interred, perfectly disgusted them. But amid all the encouragement afforded, Walter allowed weeks and months to glide on, continually mindful of his promise to Maria, yet unable to summon resolution for carrying it into effect : he did not enough trust to the providential government of Him who can raise vallies, and level mountains in the prosecution of his redeeming work ; and trembled at the conscious weakness of the instrument, when he should have gloried in the powerful hand prepared to wield it.

To establish schools upon the estate, and by that means to introduce moral and reli-



gious instruction among the slaves, was the grand object of Maria's solicitude, and the point at which Walter had pledged himself to aim : the request, indeed, could easily be made ; but then, he considered a negative might be yet more easily given, while his father's decisive character, and his own timidity, alike seemed to forbid his pleading against. Meanwhile, his conscience daily reproached him, and after a time he was led to redouble his supplications, that a way might be opened for the introduction of his pious and humane plan.

At length a favourable commencement appeared likely to forward his views ; a visitor arrived at Mr. Shirley's, who had made a tour among many of the islands, and entertained the party with an account of what he had witnessed worth recording. Walter at first only listened to the stranger, as any intelligent young person will to one from

whom he expects to derive information ; but he soon found in his remarks what rivetted his attention with feelings of the deepest interest. After describing such peculiarities of production, culture, and manners as in any way distinguished the different spots he had explored, he proceeded to speak more particularly of the negro population. " It is wonderful," he said, " in how great a variety of forms the African character develops itself ; you may trace it from the slightest possible exaltation above mere animal instinct, to the true dignity of man, as a reasoning, discriminating, accountable being, living both for God and man, for himself and others, for time and eternity."—" I have been many years among them," observed Mr. Shirley with a smile, " but cannot say I ever remarked the negro as arrived at such a pitch of eminence as you last displayed ; the former description is pretty generally applicable, I believe."

“ Indeed, Sir, I think not,” answered his guest, “ where positive good does not exist, you will meet with active evil ; such is the natural character of mankind. Awed into submission by the hand of power above him, the unprincipled slave turns upon those who are yet weaker and more helpless than himself, contrives to be the tyrant of a hovel, and awaits but a favourable moment to become the scourge of those who now repress him ; his evil passions reign uncontrolled beyond the check that outward force puts upon him ; let him but find food for them, and you shall see gluttony, cruelty, pride, envy, licentiousness, and unbounded rage in all their deformity. It is not thus with the brutes.”

“ And yet,” said Mr. Shirley, “ there are not wanting those who would reverse the order of things, by bestowing equal rights upon such a horde of barbarians, whose supe-

rior numbers would speedily render them our masters; common sense, common feeling cry out, 'No, no; keep them as they are.'

"Pardon me, Sir; surely every suggestion of reason, humanity, and above all, of Christian charity, calls upon us not to let them remain in so frightful a state; without God in the world, without hope for an approaching hereafter, without security for ourselves, except by the mere force of our arm—while we possess the means of reclaiming and exalting the character with which we must daily come in contact, is it politic, is it Christian-like, to leave our brother in the depths of degradation, and glory in our own superiority, while he perishes everlastingly?"

"That, Sir, is a difficult question to answer," replied Mr. Shirley; "we take the negro character as we find it; and otherwise we cannot expect it to appear."

"You would think differently had you

examined, as I have done, some of the settlements in neighbouring islands, where mutual confidence banishes mistrust and apprehension, where sedition dares not whisper, and alarm is unknown; where the decencies of domestic life have shamed away the hardened front of profligacy, and where the slave, losing alike the murmur of discontent and the roar of revelry in the voice of pure devotion, works cheerfully, and looks forward to a season of blessedness and rest. It is in such spots that I find the African character worthy of being ranked many degrees higher than you seem to conceive possible; and shining in bright contrast to the gloomy picture you recognized, as representing the greater part of this unhappy class."

"And by what means do they arrive at such a pitch of perfection?" asked Mr. Shirley, somewhat contemptuously.

“ Even by the same means, my dear Sir, that exalted our own forefathers from a horde of naked and remorseless savages to the lofty station, moral and political, which their descendants hold—the introduction of Christian teaching among them.”

“ I know,” said Mr. Shirley, “ that there is in some places a mania for evangelizing the slaves, as they are pleased to term it; but what other effect such innovations produce, except to make them discontented and aspiring, I have yet to learn.”

“ Christianity, properly so called, does indeed so operate on its votaries,” answered the other; “ it renders man deeply dissatisfied with himself, with his low pursuits, grovelling desires, and contemptible attainments; it teaches him to aspire to more than this world can afford; and since life is an uphill road, it places before him such a scene of brightness at the summit, as gives tenfold

alacrity to his motions, and enables him to overleap every obstacle in his path. Feeling in my own case the value of this boon from heaven, I dare not withhold from those under my authority what is so freely, so undeservedly bestowed on me."

"But you have no plantation?"

"No, Sir; I thank God that I do not possess what proves fatal to the good intentions of so many. Purposing in sincerity to do great things, they are overcome by the more powerful voice of worldly interest, when the time arrives for realizing their benevolent projects."

"I would not," observed Mr. Shirley, "place my own pecuniary advantage in opposition to the real interests of my fellow creatures; but to me it still appears more than doubtful whether the proceedings you recommend have a tendency to promote them."

“ Waving the higher claim, on which every child of fallen man may demand the bread of life at our hands, on the authority of a divine commandment,* I will take up the subject on mere temporal grounds ; tell me then, my dear Sir, is not the prevention of crime a greater benefit conferred on the community than its most rigid punishment ? ”

“ Undoubtedly.”

“ If your slave resists your authority, or seeks to escape from bondage, you fether, you flog him ; if he conspires and threatens your life, you hang him. Now, in his untutored state, with all the feelings of human kind strong within, what can be more natural than resistance to a dominion begun and continued by force, than a continual panting after the rights you withhold, and a secret spirit of deadly revenge, instigated by a disappointed,

* Mark xvi. 15.

despairing mind ? These impulses of corrupt nature reign alike in every breast not subdued to the obedience of Christ. Does not a voice of secret alarm, as you ponder on these things, haunt your slumbers, strew thorns upon your pillow, and bid you live in a state of dread ill repaid by all the luxuries of accumulating wealth ? Would you silence this voice ? Open to the view of your slave that eternity where pain cannot come, where sorrow shall cease, and crying be heard no more ; shew him the hand prepared to wipe all tears from his eyes ; tell him how God has so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for sinners ; and while assuring him that by faith in a crucified Redeemer his soul shall be saved, let him ponder the word that teaches him to bear his cross, heavy as it may be ; to suffer patiently, to abstain from revenge, to count his masters worthy of all honour ; to be obedient not

only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward ; to rejoice even in bondage, that he is the Lord's free man ; to love and pray for all he counts his persecutors, and in patience to possess his soul, until called to receive an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Oh, Mr. Shirley, is this the language of sullen discontent and worldly ambition ?”

“ It is a beautiful lesson I confess,” replied the Planter, “ if we knew but how to teach it.”

“ The Bible, Papa, the Bible will teach every word of it,” exclaimed a voice tremulous from eager emotion. Every one looked at Walter ; he had risen from his seat, and was bending towards the stranger with a countenance of such intense interest, such sparkling animation, as imparted a new character to his whole appearance. He now turned to his father, and watched for his

reply with a look of imploring solicitude that few might withstand. Mr. Shirley could not altogether disappoint him. "Well," said he, "I will think this matter over, and allow your arguments full weight; but as yet I acknowledge it rather appears to me a beautiful theory, than a plan adapted for sober practice. However, I repeat, I will consider of it."

"Do so, my friend, and may the Lord give you a right judgment! Your African brother is rent from all that most endears existence to man, deprived of the purest sweets mingled by a bounteous providence in the cup of mortal life, liberty and home. These you cannot, as you say, restore; oh, then, give him what you have to bestow; enrich him with a boon incomparably more precious than all you have torn away; a boon that shall bind him to you more firmly in the bond of grateful love, than the stoutest

chain of servitude your hands can fetter him with; a boon that will bless you in bestowing no less than him in receiving it."

The visitor departed; no immediate effect followed from this conversation; but the recollection of it dwelt on Walter's mind like a vision from heaven. It awakened his zeal, afforded him matter for prayer, and was the ground-work of a thousand delightful anticipations, as he looked from his window upon the distant huts, and trusted they should yet become the abodes of piety and peace.

Maria Shirley had made her homeward passage under the care of a very excellent woman, for whom she formed a sincere esteem; of her she often spoke to Walter, as an invaluable friend; and on Mrs. Cooper's return from another part of the island, to settle in Mr. Shirley's neighbourhood, a great intimacy commenced between the two families. Mrs. Cooper was a widow, with one

son, to whom she was left sole guardian during his minority; and had commenced some excellent plans among the negroes on his estate; the young man was still in England, but cordially concurred in all his mother's proceedings, fully understanding her motives, participating in her feelings, and relying on her judgment, notwithstanding various friendly letters despatched from the Island, anonymous and otherwise, to assure him she was introducing anarchy, and sowing the seeds of future ruin on his fine property. Mildly, but firmly, she pursued her own system; and the rapid improvement both of the plantation and the gang bore witness that as yet it had not inflicted injury upon either. To this lady Walter soon unburthened his mind; she was a woman of great delicacy, with strict notions of propriety, and felt for his difficult situation; she was aware that Mr. Shirley, with whom she never had dis-

cussed the plan of her own proceedings, would not easily brook interference in his; and from the idea of a boy of fourteen dictating to his father, her mind shrank. "Out of the mouths of babes," she mentally said, "praise may be perfected; but it becomes them not to assume the character of teachers." She therefore counselled Walter to watch carefully any opening for the introduction of his request, and to seek guidance from above; promising her best assistance whenever his father's sanction was obtained, if it appeared likely to promote his plans. She was present when the conversation before related took place; and on her next interview with Walter strongly advised him to follow up the impression made with an immediate proposal for establishing a school on the estate. This he resolved to do; but was intimidated by hearing, on the same day, some very severe remarks from a friend at his father's table,

on Mrs. Cooper and her proceedings. "She is," said he, "acting a shameful part; the young man cannot at such a distance judge of what is going on; and will arrive to witness a rising among the slaves, instead of peaceably taking possession of his father's property."—"She says," remarked another, "that she is merely making an experiment."

"Yes, at the trifling hazard of her only son's ruin, and, perhaps, a violent death. What right has she to try experiments at another's expense?"

"But he fully consents to it."

"He consent! a boy of nineteen, studying, or raking, at Cambridge, and little guessing what such a Jezebel is doing in his name."

"Come, come," said Mr. Shirley, "you are too severe upon the good lady: doubtless she means well; and though no man is less

partial to petticoat government than myself, I do not dub every lady paramount a Jezebel. Cooper will soon be over now, and I apprehend no serious consequences from the few fooleries of his mother in the interim."

The word fooleries sadly disconcerted Walter, and his resolution for some time was shaken; but visiting the plantation one morning, he witnessed some very severe punishments, heard what seemed like tones of muttered vengeance, and saw the children growing up in ignorance and vice. His heart smote him; he sought his father, beheld him in an attitude of melancholy musing, and recollected it was the anniversary of Maria's death. By a sudden impulse he ran forward, and seizing his father's hand, exclaimed, "Papa, you loved Maria?"

"Child! can you doubt it?"

"No, Papa, I do not: but I almost doubt my own affection for her. I never

told you her dying wish, the subject of her last prayers."

"Name it instantly, boy."

But the boy could not immediately speak; his heart was full, and his eyes, like the soft sky of a summer morning, were heavy with dew. At last, in a low voice, he said, "My sister wished for what our friend from—— was recommending so strongly."

"Is this true, Walter?"

"Indeed, indeed, it is Papa: and I promised to do all I could; but, alas! I can do nothing:" and the tears began to stream apace.

His father pressed him to his bosom, and, after a pause, said, "I am far from blaming you, my boy; and much as I dislike these dangerous innovations, if any thing can be devised, in the way of experiment, I will not oppose it; convinced that a little experience will shew you the futility of attempts, which,

if successful, would, no doubt, be productive of good."

These were joyful sounds to Walter; but his father wavered some time longer, and, at length, reluctantly permitted him to select a limited number of children only, and place them under the tuition of Martha Cook, superintended by himself, but not as a teacher. A peevish humour, that lasted some days, proved how very unwillingly this project had been acquiesced in by Mr. Shirley; and often did poor Walter tremble for his school: but now Mrs. Cooper appeared as a valuable ally; and by judicious remarks, casually dropped, contributed materially to restore the self-complacency which Mr. Shirley had lost, by the best deed he had ever performed in his life. However, he did not visit the school; and it was found advisable not to introduce the subject unnecessarily.

Master William was in the habit of breaking in upon the little assemblage, and sometimes adding to his mockery very rough treatment of the poor children. Martha's authority was insufficient to restrain him, and Walter dreaded lest any complaint might furnish an excuse for dismissing the school. Mr. Shirley, however, had accidentally heard of it, and after watching, with no small pleasure, the patience, forbearance, and prudent reserve of Walter—for he was a great studier of characters—he issued a most peremptory order, prohibiting William to approach the hut, and extending the privileges of his brother to an occasional personal inspection of the pupils' advancement in learning.

Matters were in this state when the two cousins arrived, and were the means of convincing Mr. Shirley how truly some of his poor little Africans appreciated the advantages he had bestowed.

It will readily be supposed that, in his cousin Joseph, Walter found a spirit more congenial to his own than among any of his nearer connexions; while the haughty and turbulent William provided Henry with abundant food for his mischief-loving disposition. There was, however, a strong line of separation between each individual of those thus paired. Walter was truly pious, conscientious in his object, steady in its pursuit, disinterested to a perfect forgetfulness of self, and, although necessarily prudent and cautious, yet far superior to any species of dissimulation. "I must not do evil that good may ensue," was the reflection with which he checked every temptation to advance the cause he had at heart by any unfair means, or to screen it from danger by disingenuous artifice. "I know that while persevering in this work, I am doing the will of God; but integrity and uprightness must

preserve me in it. If difficulties arise, He can enable me to surmount them, without acting against my conscience. If He does not so immediately, it is my part to tarry his leisure, not to rely on my own wisdom and strength, in a matter so much above them."

Joseph's character was not so consistent, nor his views so elevated: he had taken up the subject with much warmth, and loved to declaim upon it; but where silent, patient, co-operation was required, his spirit was sure to flag, and his zeal to cool. He was also easily over-awed, or beguiled into an acquiescence with opinions really opposed to those which he professed; and by his inconsiderate admissions, often laid both himself and his doctrine open to ridicule. Whence arose this difference? It was, that in Walter faith worked by love; and where the principle is always living and active, the practice

will be answerable. When the main-spring goes regularly, the lesser wheels will continue in motion. Walter did not reckon on man's applause as the recompense of his exertions, his conscience bore witness, that whether successful or not, his was the path of duty; and every page in his Bible held forth encouragement to persevere. Joseph, on the contrary, sought both motive and end among the mutable things of the world, and could find no solace elsewhere when they failed him. Naturally humane, the sufferings of others pained him, and their relief removed an uneasy sensation from his mind; an amiable disposition it certainly was, but liable to change. The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, because that righteousness impels him to be just and tender-hearted towards all creatures; he is not righteous because compassionate, but compassionate because he is righteous. Thus we

see, sometimes, the most tender dispositions hardened by long familiarity with scenes and deeds of blood, appear callous and cruel in a dreadful degree; while hearts the most stony, and tempers the most savage, when softened and subdued by the power of true religion, cast off the character of the tiger to become lambs in meekness and inoffensiveness. It is with the best moral qualities, as with the sustenance of our bodies, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Virtue is the turret, divine grace the foundation; they who attempt to build upon the former, reverse the structure, and leave it tottering, at the mercy of every wind that blows.

William Shirley and Henry Neville possessed no greater similarity than the other two: as Walter and Joseph resembled each other in the feature of benevolence, so did

they in that of selfishness. William had never left home; he was looked upon as the future proprietor of the estate, and many a bitter foretaste did he give the dependents, even in the nursery, of what they had to expect under such a master. He was decidedly cruel; a character hateful among men, as it is awfully contrary to that of God. He took pleasure in the sufferings of inferior creatures, among whom, of course, he reckoned the negroes; and in early childhood an unprincipled overseer had indulged his inhuman temper, by allowing him to add torment to the allotted punishments of the slaves, and even to ill-treat the poor little infants younger than himself; but this man's villany was discovered, and he was dismissed with indignant abhorrence by his employer, who from that time watched more carefully the conduct of his sons. William, however, was his Mamma's darling, and she

loved better to indulge his humour than to improve his mind ; until, as he grew older, he began to exercise the tyrannical spirit on her also ; and while, fearful of incensing his father against him, she concealed his base ingratitude, and suffered silently, the unassuming tenderness and respectful attentions of Walter completely won her affection, though she dared not allow his brother to suspect such a rivalry. Such is the harvest generally reaped by parents who sow crop of injudicious indulgence, and spare the rod to make work for the sword.

Henry was not thus cruel ; he derived no satisfaction from the bodily pains of any creature, but he delighted in tormenting others by wounding their self-love, drawing into notice their weaknesses, disconcerting their plans, and, in his own language, “ making them look like fools.” In this process he fancied himself exalted in proportion as

he mortified his friend; and nothing delighted him more than standing by, as an unconcerned spectator, while others were engaged in quarrels of his inciting. He valued every one according as he afforded him opportunities for these contemptible triumphs: of course he loved none, and seemed anxious to avoid being the object of regard to any, by making all shrink from his flippant and sarcastic wit. At a character like William's we shudder; from such as Henry we instinctively edge ourselves away, as from a disagreeable neighbourhood.

But it is time to resume our narrative. On the evening of the day when Walter had received the visit in his school-house, or rather late at night, the party was complete round Mr. Shirley's table; and that gentleman good-humouredly addressed his son: "I have a task for you to fulfil, Walter;

your cousins cannot comprehend that any advantage accrues to the slave from dwelling amongst us, whether as imported, or born on the estate: I have heard you maintain the point. What say you to it?"

Walter blushed; he always spoke with some hesitation to those who, not comprehending the principle he held, were apt to draw wrong conclusions from his remarks; but his father's look now wore much of smiling encouragement. However, before he could reply, Mrs. Neville exclaimed, "Oh, brother, is Walter going to make one of his long speeches in praise of the black population?"

"To plead for the plaintiff," said Henry, "in the cause of Woolly-pate *versus* Cart-whip."

"Not so," remarked Joseph, "for if Walter makes good his argument, he will

prove that the negroes are much indebted to us for enslaving them."

"Up, Mr. Counsellor, and plead," exclaimed his father, "before your brain is too much perplexed to disentangle the case."

"Must I plead, Sir, without knowing what party retains me? and to prove so many opposite things? In the character of a poor little schoolmaster, I have indeed said what you observed, or something to the same purpose; but forgive me, Papa, if I remind you that the good we may now do among the negroes by no means justifies those who brought them here. That was a bad deed, and nothing can make it otherwise."

"I think you are pretty bold to say that to Uncle's face," remarked Henry.

"He speaks truth, Nephew; and in so doing I would have him always bold. Eng-

land, by abolishing the slave-trade, has stamped her abhorrence of it. I am not one to cavil at the decision ; nay, I rejoice at it, although no gainer thereby. We will drop the question of right and wrong, Walter, and proceed to your inferences."

" Why then, Papa, I say that if we communicate to the slave our blessed religion, and instruct him in all the duties it enforces ; if we shew him the mercy of God in the gospel, and he becomes partaker in it by believing on Jesus Christ ; then he is in a better situation than if he had remained in his own country, in ignorance and sin."

" Prove it," said his father.

But Walter was no logician ; he felt it to be true, but could not communicate his feeling to others, neither could he prove in words what was as clear to his apprehension as the fact of his own existence : however, after a pause, he continued—



“ You know, Papa, time is at best very short : ‘ The days of our years are threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.’ But how many are called away so young—so young”—his voice faltered, and his eye involuntarily turned to the profile of Maria, which hung against the wall : then very rapidly he proceeded—“ But eternity, Papa, how long that is ! no end, no change : always the same, ages after ages—hundreds of millions of years gone, and no end to what is coming. Oh, what a poor shadowy thing is mortal life, compared with this terrible eternity ! But into eternity we must all go ; and there are but two places, heaven and hell : only one road, one way to heaven, which is by faith in Christ Jesus. Now, Papa, if you, finding a poor negro in slavery, far from his own country,

and yet much farther from heaven—if you open to him the Bible, which is the guide to that blessed place, and help him on the way thither, you give him something by so much better than what he has lost, as eternity is longer than time, heaven better than hell. I do not say it is happiness to be made a slave, or born one, far from it; but I do say that the knowledge of Christ is the greatest treasure either slave or free-man can find.”

“ Never talk of Methodist parsons while we have Dr. Walter to preach,” said William.

“ Silence, Sir !” exclaimed his father, with a most severe frown. “ Now, Joseph, what say you to Walter’s argument ?”

“ Indeed, Uncle, I don’t well comprehend it: Walter seems to take it for granted that a person cannot go to heaven from Africa without travelling round by Europe or the West Indies. What is to become of all the

poor innocent blacks who die in their own country?" Mr. Shirley looked at Walter for his reply; he readily gave it.

"An innocent black, cousin, or an innocent white, might assuredly go to heaven direct, (to follow your way of expression,) but on the whole earth you cannot find a just man that sinneth not; and the wrath of God being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, all must come to Jesus Christ for salvation, or perish."

"I never will believe such uncharitable doctrine," exclaimed Joseph.

"It is quite frightful," said his mother.

"The point is too knotty for you or I, Walter," observed his father; "you cannot maintain that ground, take another."

"Well, Papa, I will take a plain and distinct commandment, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every

creature.' And then follows, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' I suppose, Papa, it is enough that we find those words in the Bible, as spoken by our Lord, without trying to give any reason for obeying them."

"So," said Henry, "we should make men slaves, and bring them home in chains to preach to them; do you hear that Joe?"

"He did not hear it from me, cousin," replied Walter mildly; "I set out by declaring the contrary; Christians ought to have sent the Gospel to Africa many ages since; the words are, '*Go ye* into all the world;' but if Africa is neglected, and I meet a poor African in another country, and preach the Gospel to him, I obey my Saviour's word as far as I can, and he has cause to be thankful that by any means he hears it; for surely, surely," he added

with great earnestness, "God would not so very particularly command a thing that is not necessary." Mr. Shirley was silent and thoughtful; Walter observed it, and went on. "There are ten little creatures on this estate who have themselves learned, and taught to I know not how many others, that Jesus Christ is their Saviour to redeem, and their King to govern them; that they must give Him an account of how they perform their duties on earth; and I will venture to say, on the authority of the overseer, that no children can work more readily, or behave more correctly than these do. Papa has been so good as to increase the number, and a few years will show, whether they do their duty the worse for knowing it better, or, rather, whether they will not be happy and useful in proportion to what they learn of true religion, and virtue which springs from it."

“Oh, Watty,” exclaimed William, “make them virtuous, and you will be a wizard, the eighth wonder of the world.”

“A second Lycurgus,” added Henry, “and among the Helots too.”

“It is not I who can make them virtuous,” said Walter; “but the character of true Christians is, ‘a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ It is the only soil real virtue will grow upon; we must prepare the ground, and sow the seed, and look to God for the increase.”

“Mr. Counsellor, you have pleaded well for the cause you labour in,” said his father, “and have earned your fee. Mr. School-master, you have taken a great charge on yourself, and I know your pocket-money has quietly melted away into books, slates, and other implements of learning; so to answer your claim on both scores, I hand you this purse; Walter, my dear boy,” he

added, laying his hand on the youth's head, "may God bless you, and make you what you seem to promise!"

Such looks, and such language were by no means common from Mr. Shirley; Walter seemed oppressed beyond the power of utterance: his mother's eyes repeated what his father had spoken audibly; Mrs. Neville declared his cleverness was wonderful; William tossed up his head in disdain, while Henry enjoyed his mortification; and Joseph felt all his zeal excited to the highest pitch. Yet Walter rejoiced with trembling; for he knew that fresh opposition from without and within had always followed a moment of peculiar encouragement; and success could not elate him beyond due bounds. Mr. Shirley, indeed, had begun to consider the subject with serious attention; and he was a man of too much sense to allow prejudice a successful struggle against his better

reason. Without entering fully into Walter's views, in considering religion so much the main business of life, he was perfectly aware that a higher principle of action, a prospect of greater and more enduring reward and punishment, would, if really introduced among his negroes, favourably affect their conduct, and render them more tractable to gentle government. The stop put to the foreign barter in slaves had rendered it doubly the interest of every proprietor to cherish those he already possessed, and encourage a home population among them. He was not one of those foolish individuals who affect to doubt that the negro is equally susceptible of joy, sorrow, pleasure, and pain with the white man; and he well knew the mind's great influence over the body. Whatever contributes to the ease of the former, will promote health in the latter, and the reverse. Indeed, Mr. Shirley, in

common with other accurate observers, had remarked, that the African's feelings are peculiarly quick: he is more violent in his passions, whether impelled by anger, grief, affection, or joy. The fatal influence long exercised over them by the pretenders to Obeah, (as they called the supposed witchcraft practised among them,) and the numbers who pined to death under the supposition of being so doomed to perish, proved that they were keenly alive to supernatural impressions; and that it would be more profitable to deal with them as rational creatures under moral government, than as mere machines, or beasts of burden, he could not doubt. "Why should not I," he said to himself, "by means of a religion that is doubtless true, exercise as strong an influence over them to our mutual advantage, as those Obeah men did to their destruction?" But still the objection arose, if we admit them to

a participation in our rights as to religion, and impart to them a portion of our learning, will they not aspire to equality, and cast off the yoke which they now submit to, under the feeling of our boundless superiority? On this point he could by no means satisfy himself; but the more he argued it, the more he shrunk from the responsibility of excluding any of God's creatures from the knowledge of their Creator. "Walter says the Bible teaches submission to all constituted authorities; so said the good fellow who set these matters afloat in my brain; if this be so, the Bible will be a safeguard to us, rather than otherwise. I wish I knew more of its contents;" then he mused, and could not but ask himself what prevented his examining it? but the enmity of man's evil heart betrays itself on the suggestion of such a proceeding; its language is, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge

of thy ways;" and Mr. Shirley impatiently muttered, "Pshaw! shall I become a student in divinity to introduce theological learning among my slaves? yet the question must be settled, and speedily. I have passed the boundary; instruction is introduced, and many are eager to partake in it; if it be unsafe, I must put a timely check on its progress; if not, some regulations must be adopted at once to allow of learning, and to restrain the mania within due bounds." At length he resolved to talk over the matter with Mrs. Cooper; and as the English packet had lately arrived, he made it an excuse to inquire for the welfare of her son.

He found the good lady in tears, but they were evidently not of grief: she received him with a smile, and replied to his kind queries, "Indeed, my dear friend, I have most welcome tidings. You probably know

that much censure has been passed on my conduct in the management of Alfred's estate: letters have been written to him, with many remonstrances, and harsh remarks. Of this I was aware, and entreated him to state fully and candidly his own view of the subject, well satisfied that he is competent to judge: for, to you I may say it, Mr. Shirley, few young men are endowed with finer natural abilities, or have more sedulously laboured to improve them than my Alfred; and though not yet of age by law, he is looked to as a Mentor by many greatly his seniors."

"I know it well, my dear Madam, and that you have just cause to be proud of such a son."

"Thankful, not proud: but here is his letter."

Mr. Shirley read as follows:—

"Be assured, dearest Mother, that neither

indolence, distance, nor even a passive submission to your acknowledged judgment, led me so readily to acquiesce in your recent arrangements. I have deliberately weighed the subject as one of most momentous importance, not only to my temporal interests, but as forming a heavy item in the great account that I must one day render to Him whose unworthy stewards we all are. I have attentively considered the arguments of your opponents, well meaning as I hope some of them are, and have borne in mind my own inexperience, and early removal from the scene in question; but the more deeply I ponder, the more firmly does the root of conviction strike; and thus I represent to myself the case.

“ I find myself the owner of property, consisting partly of land and partly of labourers, without whose aid that land would be nearly worthless. My business is to take

possession; and my object, of course, must be to extract from this estate whatever by good management it may be made to yield. The persons who dress the soil are attached to it; they form part of my inheritance, and over them I exercise an arbitrary power. They are rational beings; their actions spring from motives, so far as they are uncontrouled, and they are capable of deliberately choosing between moral good and evil. Their numbers are large, and if refractory may become dangerous; but my interest demands that no diminution take place; and any increase must bring corresponding advantages to me. Here I trace three points highly desirable to be attained on my part: first, to furnish them with such motives as shall produce actions morally good, and render them averse from evil; secondly, to keep this large number in due subjection, without exhausting my finances

upon supernumerary governors and guards; and, thirdly, to promote the increase of my gang.

“ Now, if my live stock consisted of brutes, I could not do better than appeal to their instinct, by teaching them that idleness or viciousness would provoke the lash, and the contrary win approval with good cheer; for my brutes could not reason, they would not deliberately consider of casting off a yoke which God has been pleased to lay upon their necks by a perpetual decree, causing the fear and dread of man to be on every beast of the field; neither are they capable of balancing the shame of disgrace against the credit of approval, nor susceptible of the pleasing consciousness that well-doing excites in a rational creature: but when, instead of brutes, I have to deal with those to whom all these things are perfectly natural, what can be more absurd than to follow with

them the same plan I should pursue with cattle? By degrading them in outward circumstances to the level of brutes, do I not debase their minds, and fix them in a state of sullen hardihood, reckless of aught but personal suffering, callous to every better feeling, and goaded with envy at my power, hatred of my tyranny, disdain of my injustice, and a gnawing desire of revenge for the injuries inflicted? The brute *feels*, the negro *thinks*: under the most stupid, or most volatile exterior, he bears a heart: a soil capable of cultivation, an ability to weigh his deserts against his earnings, and a secret consciousness, that, let me lord it over him as I may, he is still a man and a brother. Instead, therefore, of repressing the gentler feelings, and arming against me those that are evil and dangerous, let me encourage him to think; let me convince him, not only that he is amenable to my authority now, but that

a higher Power overlooks us both, and takes cognizance of our every action ; that if he defrauds or any way injures me, however he may either escape detection or glory, even under the lash in successful wickedness here, he has to give a final account to Him who is the avenger of all such, while integrity and uprightness will not fail of their reward. Let this motive take due hold on him, and for his own sake he will square his actions by it ; while, on the other hand, should I exceed my just authority, and oppress him, the assurance of a future appeal to the unerring Judge will disarm him, and allay the thirst for present revenge. You perceive, my dear Mother, that I am arguing on selfish principles only, keeping my own interest in view, as they do who would persuade me that your plans are inimical to it.

“ In the next place, I must for a moment suppose that my gang is tainted with sedi-

tious principles, or misled into acts of open violence upon some opportunity where numbers will prevail for the moment. Upon that moment my life and the lives of my family hang. Shall we be surrounded by an armed band of untaught savages, not only burning with revenge, but considering such an act meritorious, raging with all the heathenish cruelty of barbarous warfare for the blood of their victims, and confident that if they fall in shedding it, they shall revive, as victorious heroes, in a native paradise, amid the triumphant gratulations of those from whom they were so long severed? or shall we behold in them men who have been taught the knowledge of the true God, who fully understand that murder, robbery, and revenge, are specially forbidden; that they are strictly commanded to return good for evil, and that the commission of outrage will be at the peril of their own souls, hell yawning before their

conscious eyes, instead of the invitations of a blooming paradise? Surely the alternative is so plain, that it strikes me with amazement how any man can voluntarily live within the reach of unreclaimed, exasperated savages, whom he might transform to a civilized and christianized society."——

"There is reason in that," said Mr. Shirley, pausing over the letter.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Cooper, "and you will confess he argues it coolly, not as an enthusiast."

Mr. Shirley resumed the letter.

"You, who reside on the spot, are so accustomed to see the negro toiling beneath his burden, and quailing under the lash; so inured to utter the voice of command, and receive the homage of unresisting servility, that you cannot realize to yourselves the same being fired to deeds of madness, glaring on you the frightful look of revenge, and

brandishing the weapon of destruction over your defenceless head. You forget that no supernatural restraint is laid upon him, as upon the horse and the ox; that should the contest come, it is man to man, with the fiercest passions of man's darkened soul to goad him on. We, who from a distance view the scene, regard it as it really is; and, however short and unsuccessful a rising of the black population, whether partial or general, must eventually prove, yet in its devastating burst, composed of such elements as you suffer to ferment around you now, it would be bloody, murderous, exterminating. Tell me not, then, that I miscalculate, as to policy or expense, when I extract from the viper his fangs, and new-model an assemblage of such perilous ingredients.

“ Lastly, in promoting the increase of my dependents, let me consider under what circumstances do communities best thrive; and

if it be not where morality reigns, where domestic rights are inviolate, where the parent watches over his child, and the child honours and succours his parent; where the master is loved, and the servant trusted, and all springing from a general deference to the word of God, cemented by the communion of outward worship; then we will no longer call England happy or prosperous, but seek among savage lands a form to supersede her ancient constitution, or rather a pattern by which to rend her piece-meal.

“ Thus far I have written as in reply to some of our advisers, looking not beyond this earthly span: but to you, my beloved Mother,—who have taught me that it is a small matter to be judged of man’s judgment, that this earthly pageant will quickly pass away, and my doom through an endless eternity be fixed according to the tenor of my mortal pilgrimage; to you, who have

made me cón and pray over the golden rule, doing unto all men as I would they should do unto me; and bade me pause and ponder on the daily petition, ‘Thy kingdom come,’— I would not bring forward the plea of carnal policy: I would take a higher ground, and tell you that I dared not ask for the coming of the Lord’s kingdom among men, while I resisted its introduction where my own influence might best promote its spread; that I cannot lift to heaven an appealing eye, and ask to partake in the rich mercies of redemption, while braving the wrath of the Lamb, conveyed in that awful reproof, ‘O thou wicked servant! shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?’”

“I am glad to have seen this letter,” said Mr. Shirley, as he folded it up, “and from my soul, my dear Madam, do I congratulate you on possessing such a son. It is

a pity that a mind so ingenuous and so pure, should ever become hardened and obscured by commerce with the world ; it is the delicate blue of the fresh grape, too easily chafed away, and never recovered."

"I do not apprehend such an event," answered Mrs. Cooper, "Alfred's principles are fixed on too sure and solid a foundation ; genuine Christianity is the ground-work of all you so admire."

"His principles may remain, and I trust they will ; but these feelings so fresh and delicate—"

"Well, they are the blossoms if you will ; and should they fall off it will be but to make room for more precious fruit."

"I wish to believe all you say, for truly I think my family contains a sapling promising to shoot up into such a tree as your Alfred."

"Dear Walter !" exclaimed Mrs. Cooper,

her eyes filling with tears of delight, "how I rejoice that his worth is appreciated by you."

"In truth the young monkey is kicking up a dust among us; I mean among the negroes, and in a fair way of putting the whole gang to school; but I must take my leave. Tell Alfred I honour him; and if I do not quite concur in his views and projects, it is because experience, like truth, is a stubborn thing."

Mr. Shirley was ashamed to own how far he did concur in these opinions; and as to his experience, wherein did it consist? No trial, at least no unsuccessful one, had been made within the sphere of his observation, or he would have appealed to it. Experience, indeed, told him that negroes were often stubborn, and, perhaps, always profligate, that they were addicted to falsehood and theft; and would sometimes rather be

flogged than fulfil their allotted task ; it told him that they were easily misled, and dangerous when desperate ; but experience could not say how far a religious and moral education would counteract the evil tendencies which, *without it*, had impressed him with so hopeless an opinion of the African character. He had, like others, governed them by the whip ; and found it necessary to keep that engine in frequent use ; but as he never had appealed to their intellectual faculties, it was vain to suppose he could judge with certainty how such an appeal would succeed. What Mr. Shirley sometimes alluded to under the title of experience, was mere hearsay ; for instance, he had been told that where teachers were admitted on the estates, discontent and sedition were disseminated among the blacks ; and that the conduct of those teachers was subversive of the doctrine they preached ; but these were unsubstantiated

rumours; and the most rigid enquiry could trace them to no more authentic source than the incoherent expressions of slaves at the gibbet, or under the torture, who spoke what was suggested by their disordered minds, or possibly, by unprincipled enemies of the slandered individuals. Notwithstanding the cry of sedition, it was clearly proved, and that too on oath before Parliament, that the scale of subordination, peaceable industry, wealth and population in the different islands, bore an exact proportion to the extent, both in time and degree, of the religious instruction encouraged among them; and thus did real fact and nominal experience, stubborn alike, stand facing each other, disdaining either to give place, and leaving the world to judge between them.

It has been before stated, that an overseer was dismissed on the discovery of his indulging William's inhuman disposition; many

atrocious deeds against the poor negroes came to light at that time; and Mr. Shirley, as some atonement for their sufferings, extended their usual periods of relaxation, gave them several holidays, and connived at a good deal of extravagant merriment on those occasions; the natural consequence of idleness and debauch followed; they were languid and spiritless, grumbled at their tasks, and gave more trouble than when under heavy oppression; till at last Mr. Shirley withdrew the new privileges, and called it an unsuccessful attempt to govern his negroes by gentle methods. So far experience doubtless was on his side, but experience of what? not of instruction, and a legitimate stimulus to industry, but of alternate toil and revelling, exertion and debauch. It is strange that the most sensible, shrewd, judicious men, who in all other matters might take the lead of their neighbours, seem to fall under a species of in-

fatuation, where the negroes are concerned, and cannot apply the simplest rules of common reasoning to what passes among their gangs.

But we must return to Walter and his school : it continued to thrive ; and the overseer bore rather a reluctant testimony to the exemplary conduct of its little members ; he was too honest to misrepresent the matter ; but too prejudiced willingly to believe the evidence of his own senses, so strongly opposed to his avowed opinion. When, however, a trifling but gaudy article, lost by his wife, was brought to him by one of the most incorrigible little thieves in the gang, and his questions answered with great simplicity and truth, he almost doubted his own infallibility.

“ Massa,” said Nelly, advancing with much respect, and dropping a courtesy, “ Massa, me find dis ’mong de trash.”

“ Indeed ! and why did’nt you keep it ?”

“ Me no right to it, Massa; ’tis Missy’s.”

“ I never knew you before trouble yourself with the question of right or wrong, Nelly.”

“ No Massa ; me was very bad child ; me sabby* dat well”.

“ But you are wonderfully good now, I suppose ?”

“ Me pray God He make me so, Massa,” answered Nelly very humbly, “ and me hearken de good words Buckra Walter teachee we ; but my heart still bad ; say, stealee dat, and me just put out hand ; but God say ‘ Dou shalt no steal ;’ and so me run here wid it, Massa.”

“ Upon my word,” said the Overseer, “ I think ”—but what he thought did not appear ; he walked away, bestowing on Nelly a nod

* Know.

of approbation; and turning round after a few steps, saw her bounding along towards the scene of her labour, with a pace very much contrasted with her usual sluggish motion. He looked at her for some moments, and then muttered with a shrug of the shoulders, "Buckra Walter is likely to prove a great Reformer."

An event, far more serious in its appearance and consequences, took place soon after, through the malicious folly of Henry Neville, and shewed to Mr. Shirley what a little leaven could do in leavening a lump.

Henry had longed for what he called a grand kick up, that is to say, a quarrel among the boys; for this, William always was ripe, and Joseph easily beguiled to commit himself; but Walter was never off his guard, conscious not only how important was the maintenance of his character in the eyes of his school, but also that if he acted

improperly his offence might be punished by dismissing it. Henry was nettled to find him so superior to all his attempts, and resolved to exasperate him. There was in the school a negro boy, named Pompey, of whose attainments in learning Walter often spoke exultingly at home ; while the simple fervent piety of the little slave filled him with secret gratitude and joy. Pompey had been a favourite of Maria's, and received many valuable lessons from her ; until Master William, conceiving a particular spite against him, contrived to have him forbidden to approach the dwelling-house. Walter had not neglected him ; and Pompey could read before the school was established, of which he became the pride. Henry remarked that Pompey's book, with which he scampered to school, much resembled William's Latin Horace, which the latter was fond of displaying whenever a pedantic fit seized him, par-

ticularly in company. This Horace was privately taken away by Henry, and kept until the day before a large party was expected at Mr. Shirley's. William fretted greatly at his loss; and the other did not fail to aggravate his vexation. Henry, feeling for nothing but the gratification of his mischievous temper, put the Horace in his pocket, and went to meet little Pompey on his way to school. Despatching him on some trifling errand, and offering to keep his book till he returned, the wicked boy easily changed them; and no sooner had the poor slave ran off again towards school, than he hastily went for William, and told him he was certain he saw Horace in Pompey's hand.

"The black rascal! what should he do with a Horace?" exclaimed William.

"Oh, a little harmless vanity, I suppose, to seem more learned than he is. I merely told you on account of the party to-morrow,

thinking your book will be clawed in pieces by Walter's black squad."

William hurried towards the school, overtook the poor boy near the door, and seizing him by the throat, snatched the book from him, which he no sooner saw, than he began to beat Pompey unmercifully. The noise drew Walter forth, followed by Martha Cook, and, to Henry's disappointment, the Overseer also, who had gone on some business to the school-house.

Some force was necessary to rescue Pompey, while William, choking with rage, fiercely threatened the Overseer for his interference, and called for the driver.

"Not so fast, Sir," said the Overseer, "we don't flog without knowing why; what has he done?"

"Stolen my cousin's book," said Henry.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Walter, "How is this, Pompey?" But here the Overseer in-

terposed, and said the negroes must not be encouraged to make speeches; if Master William's book was found on him that was enough.

"I took it from his hand," cried William, displaying it.

"Had you that book in your hand?" said the Overseer to Pompey, "Yes, or no."

"Yes, Massa; but"—

"Pray Mr. William where did you lose it, and when?" continued the Overseer.

"Do you think I'll be questioned by you, Sir, and put on a level with that black cur? Down with him, and flog him instantly."

"No," said the other, after a pause: while Henry whispered to Walter, "Will you see the poor thing flogged without a trial?" The driver was come up, and two negroes with him. Henry seeing matters stand thus, and thinking that the Overseer's absence would compel Walter to come forward,

whispered to the former that Mr. Shirley was in the next field, and he had better go for him : this was false ; but it answered his purpose ; and no sooner was the Overseer gone, but William, screaming with passion, ordered the negroes to hold Pompey down ; they obeyed, and he commanded the driver to flog him ; but Walter calmly, though resolutely, told him if he did, it would be at his own peril, as Mr. Shirley was summoned.

“ You lie ! ” exclaimed William ; “ Papa is five miles off,” and suddenly wresting the whip from the frightened driver, who was himself a slave, he commenced most furiously lashing poor Pompey. Walter rushed forward ; Henry, who saw the blood spout from the innocent victim, was terrified ; he held Walter, and shouted to William to forbear, but in vain ; Walter broke from his grasp, and instantly drew back, for at that

moment Mr. Shirley rode up, and throwing himself from his horse, saluted William with a terrible cut across the shoulders from his riding switch, following it up until the cane broke. "Since you are so fond of summary justice, Sir," he said, "take what you merit, were it only for disobedience to my positive orders." For since William's outrages were known to his father, he was strictly prohibited from interfering in any way with the punishment of slaves.

William roared with rage and pain, while Henry stood confounded at the prospect of an exposure, and Walter, pale and motionless, gazed on the lacerated flesh of his poor little pupil. Mr. Shirley turned to him, and sternly asked the meaning of this uproar at the school-house door: he had little to tell; and the rest, in vindicating themselves, threw abundance of blame on each other: all feared William, for they beheld in him their

future master. "Raise up the boy," said Mr. Shirley, "and bring him hither;" and Pompey, bleeding, weeping, and trembling, stood before him; yet with a look in which neither guilt nor fear could be traced.

Allowed to speak, he said that he took his book, as usual, that he met Massa Henry, who sent him a little way, and when he returned he ran with all his speed to school; was overtaken by Massa William, accused of theft, and beaten.

"How came you by that book?"

"Don't know, Massa: me bro't anoder book out wid me, sure."

Mr. Shirley turned to Henry; who stammered out "Indeed, Uncle, if I had thought of such a consequence—it was only for a little fun—I changed the book."

"For shame, young gentleman," said the Overseer, "why did you not say so at first, and save Master William the pain he has suffered?"

“Master William has his deserts,” replied Mr. Shirley. “Come home with me, young gentlemen; and, Nelson, see the boy taken care of.”

They departed; William lingering last, and muttering exultingly to Pompey, “I have dressed your black hide for you, you whelp, at any rate.”

We must hope there are not many characters to be found, capable of what we have described William’s conduct to be; but would not the boy who can wontonly torment and ill-treat a poor dog, bird, or any creature, as readily exercise that barbarity on his own species, if he dared? When I see a driver inhumanly flogging and goading his cattle, I cannot but suppose he would do the same, if permitted, to a gang of negroes; and it is to the strict laws of our country that we are indebted, under God, for protection from many, who want neither the

will nor the power to injure us, if they had opportunity. A great deal of severity, often both unjust and excessive, must fall to the lot of slaves; and surely we are bound to lend every aid to the plans formed for their advantage, were it only as a thank-offering for our superior privileges. We cannot screen them from the lash, nor secure them the impartial justice we glory in; but we can provide them with the defensive armour of Christian fortitude, and pour into their wounds the balm of heavenly consolation.

Poor Pompey, smarting from the blows, and grieved at the unprovoked malignity of William, was yet more distressed lest any evil should befall the school and its young teacher through his means: he did not comprehend the business of the book; nor, when his own was returned to him, could he imagine where he lost it. The ungenerous

artifice of Henry did not occur to his simple mind; he mentioned it to his mother; she looked mysterious, and said, "Me tink dat be like same as Obeah." Pompey had too much Christian knowledge to believe in witchcraft; he considered the whole work as William's. Meanwhile, Mr. Shirley gave a serious lecture to the boys at home; and though it was impossible to attach any blame to Walter, he spoke peevishly to him, and threw out hints of disapprobation concerning his plans; in fact he had been passing the morning with some who were bitterly hostile to negro improvement, and who paraded again all the threadbare arguments, and uttered the startling predictions to which he had formerly lent a ready ear. Old prejudices, never perfectly overcome, whispered to the same effect: and he was riding along, gloomy and dissatisfied, when the Overseer met him, and begged him to repair to the

school-house. The first burst of his angry feeling fell, very deservedly, on William ; but, again, he regretted having so degraded him in the sight of the negroes, who were not intended to suppose a white skin was made to be flogged, or that their master's son could submit to the same discipline with themselves. Joseph, too, on hearing what had passed, gave vent to his indignation in language that offended his uncle, exclaiming, that it was better to be a dog than a negro, and condemning, indiscriminately, all concerned in the management of slaves. It will readily be supposed that poor Walter trembled for the very existence of his school, and was glad when the hour of rest arrived, without any express denunciation against it ; he retired, and poured out his heart in prayer, committing himself, and the cause he laboured in, to Him who was able to uphold both.

Some days passed away, and Mr. Shirley still appeared wavering between two inclinations. Sometimes it seemed as if he would put a stop to the school system altogether, and at other times he shewed a disposition to extend it. Walter anxiously watched, and diligently sought to make the most of present opportunity, with his little pupils; when a happy event turned the current of Mr. Shirley's feelings in his favour.

William had a young horse, not thoroughly broken, wild and vicious; his father was averse to his riding it, but secretly proud of the daring spirit he manifested, and gave no absolute prohibition, only requiring that a steady groom should always accompany him. It happened one evening, when William wished to ride, that the groom was absent; and he mounted his poney, intending to take but a short ramble, unknown to his father.

The coolness of the evening, and the

frolicsome temper of both horse and rider, led them to some distance, until the animal becoming more and more wilful, paid no attention to voice, hand, or heel, except that, on a smart application of the two latter, he bounded off at full gallop, and made for a spot, where, between a precipice and a forest of low tangled trees, William would have finished his earthly course, by being dashed to pieces in the fall, or borne headlong against the sturdy branches.

The negroes had left their employ; not a human form was seen, and William, nearly senseless from terror and the rapid motion, ceased to resist the will of his steed. He had now only a circuit to make, by a narrow beaten path, and a gap would give free entrance to the perilous scene, when he passed several little negroes, sitting on the edge of a grove that skirted his track. Too giddy to distinguish much, he only saw an instant-

neous movement among them, but just as he approached the fatal gap, something was flung across it, and a negro boy, shouting and waving a branch in each hand, presented himself beyond, intimidating the horse from proceeding further. William, revived at the sight, by great exertion pulled up, and wheeled the horse round, who immediately set off, at the same pace, homewards, but was arrested in his progress by a party of two or three slaves, who succeeded in reducing him to obedience. William had seen death, apparently, nearer than ever before, and with dismay that rendered his deliverance a matter of real thankfulness. He told the negroes to find the boy who placed himself in the gap, and send him to the house: knowing that it would be fruitless to attempt concealment of what had passed, and hoping to atone for it in his father's eyes, by a display of gratitude, which Mr. Shirley

had often reproached him for being sadly deficient in.

He did not escape a reprimand; and Joseph added to it the remark, that if negroes were the treacherous beings some described them, they need only have hid themselves in the trees, and left him to his fate. In the course of the evening a servant announced, that Pompey was waiting at the door by Mr. Willliam's command. The colour mounted into Walter's cheeks, while William said, "I gave him no command." "Call him in," said Mr. Shirley, "I should not be very much astonished if he proved the young hero of the gap."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Henry.

"And why impossible?"

"Because, Uncle, because——"

"You think it incredible that good should be returned for evil? Well, here is Pompey; what is your business, boy?"

“ Please, Massa, de Overseer tell me, Massa William send for me.”

“ Have you seen Master William before, to-day, Pompey ?”

“ Yes, Massa ; me saw him riding ; him horse ran away wid him ; so me try stop de horse ; make him turn ; run away home—oder men stop him den ; so Massa William tell send me here.”

Pompey was much embarrassed, and rolled his eyes about continually ; when not confused, his language was remarkably good for a negro boy. Mr. Shirley observed his disorder, and desired Walter to question him farther. Encouraged by his young teacher, Pompey readily explained the whole matter ; he and some other boys of the school had repaired to a retired spot, to con over their lessons for the ensuing evening ; and when William passed at such terrific speed, Pompey dashed across to the gap, by a very

short cut, knowing that the horse must make a considerable circuit to reach it; the other boys ran off to summon some men who were at a little distance, and by whom William was intercepted on his return. Pompey had thrown across the gap the branch of a tree which lay near; and fearing the horse might leap it, added his voice and actions to intimidate him; knowing that a most dangerous place lay just beyond that point.

“ So,” said Mr. Shirley, “ I suppose you were afraid, if Master William perished, none would be found to flog you.” Pompey with great simplicity replied, “ Driver could flog me, Massa.”—“ But were you not a fool, to risk your own safety for one who you knew hated you, and would one day be a cruel, oppressive master to your race?” Pompey looked at Walter, who only said, “ Answer my father.” The boy took courage, and with much earnestness

said, " No, Massa ; me was no fool ; ' de fear of de Lord, dat is wisdom ;' we should do as we would be done by. What for me no help Massa William, when God help me every day ? Me sorry too much, if Massa William dead before God love him. Some day, Massa William tink of dis, ' may be die soon ;' den him pray God for Jesus Christ turn him heart, den God love him, and him love oder : no cruel to poor negro—no angry in passion ; but meek like Jesus Christ. O Massa ! me pray much for Massa William—God know me do ; and me tank my good God send me to help him—not make him die."

Pompey's eyes almost overflowed as he spoke : and the boys looked upon each other with various feelings—certainly all did feel.

Mr. Shirley continued, " You pray, then, every day ; what do you pray for ?"

"First, Massa, we pray Jesus Christ wash away me sin; den for a new heart to love God; den me pray for Massa Walter, he teachee poor childer; den me pray for you, Massa, make you love God, and bless you, and bid you live long, and for Missy, and all; den me pray for poor negroes, dey learn God's word; make dem no drink, no lie, no steal, no fight, no lazy. When me kneel down, God send plenty pray, Massa," he added with a smile of joy and confidence.

Mr. Shirley turned abruptly to his son.

"William, what do you intend to do?"

"I don't know, Sir: I—I— am ashamed to think." He stopped, and the tears stood in his eyes.

"Ask Uncle to give him his freedom," whispered Joseph.

Mr. Shirley then inquired of Pompey what reward he would like best, as it was

his intention to give him some proof of his approval. Pompey, with very little hesitation, answered, that he wanted nothing himself; but if his master was so good as to let his two little sisters go to school with him, he would be the happiest boy on the island. "Take them in to-morrow, Walter," said Mr. Shirley; "and now Pompey, you may go to your home; I shall see you again."

The little negro withdrew, and Mrs. Shirley said, "He ought to have had some present besides."

"I wonder he did not ask a festival for all the gang," observed Mrs. Neville; "he thought only of his own family."

"Festivals," said Henry, "are contrary to his principles and prayers; no drink is amongst his petitions."

"He means no drunkenness," observed Walter.

“No drink, no lie, no fight, steal, lazy,” muttered Mr. Shirley; “they will hardly practise what they voluntarily pray against. I see it now more clearly; yes, Walter, I see the excellence of your plan, and judge of it by its fruits. That your precepts are good, no one can doubt; that they are practicable we have seen, and William has felt; and after a greater conflict of mind than I have often experienced, my determination is fully formed. Not, however, upon this extraordinary occasion, though doubtless it has tended to confirm my impression; but at the very time William was so rashly hazarding his life, I was consulting a friend, who completely overthrew my objections, and convinced me what path I ought to pursue.”

“Was it Mrs. Cooper?” asked his wife.

“No, my dear; it was Mrs. Cooper’s adviser, the Bible. Admitting that it is the word of God, given for our direction, we

err most presumptuously and criminally, when we err from ignorance of its contents. I resolved to search for myself; and, referring to passages that had been named to me, I found them, and many more, bearing strongly upon this point. I find it written, 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.' And a just man, asserting his uprightness in the various relationships of life, has this forcible appeal, 'If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' I must confess these words struck me very strongly; and ascertaining from the whole tenor of every part of the Scriptures into which I looked, that God undoubtedly would have his way made known upon earth, his saving health unto

all nations, I dare not incur the responsibility of withholding proper instruction from those under my personal authority.

"In England," continued Mr. Shirley, "the places of worship are numerous in proportion to the population: no man is excluded from hearing, if he cannot read, what God requires him to know; but we are aware that such privileges are not attainable by our slaves; and doubtless it is the duty of every proprietor to make good the deficiencies as far as lies in his power; nor do I now believe that duty militates against his worldly interests."

"Oh no; Papa," said Walter; "it is written, 'godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Surely it cannot be the interest of any creature in the world to offend and oppose the will of that world's Creator and Governor."

“ I think so too, Walter ; but we must be careful, that you do not go beyond what is necessary and fitting for the negroes to learn. What do you principally teach in your school ?”

“ Reading, Papa ; a little writing to the most apt among them ; and a general knowledge of Christianity, as set forth in the Catechism of our Church, and in Dr. Watts’s Catechism ; with selections from the New Testament, which they commit to memory, and repeat to me.”

“ Very well ; do you select the most practical parts ?”


“ Papa, if you would condescend to visit and examine my pupils yourself, you would be better able to judge what they are doing.”

“ Really, Walter, I should prove an awkward catechist ; but the Rector from — will be here to-morrow, to the christening of our neighbour’s infant ; and I will ask

him to undertake the office, accompanying him myself."

This proposal rather startled Walter; he knew the Rector had expressed opinions much at variance with his father's present views, and almost dreaded his influence might operate unfavourably; but a moment's reflection convinced him, that candid investigation on his father's part promised favourable results; and that he was not a man to let others judge for him, however he had appeared to fluctuate in considering this really momentous question. Nor was Walter without hope that the clergyman, whom he knew to be a truly benevolent character in most respects, might be impressed by the evident tendency of his plan to promote virtue and happiness where little more than the name of either was hitherto known; for who would dignify, with the title of happiness the paroxysms of un-

thinking mirth with which the heavy hours of laborious slavery were chequered; those seasons of present enjoyment, when the soul can neither venture to review the past, nor perceive one gleam of assured hope upon the unknown future? The clergyman, Mr. Clifford, was a man of intellect and information, punctual in the discharge of his clerical duties among those whom he considered his peculiar flock; but of these the negroes in general formed no part. He had occasionally made their characters the subject of conversation, and successfully refuted the absurd arguments that some advanced, on their supposed inferiority in the scale of being: he had shown that they were men—men of like passions with ourselves, and as far removed from the most sagacious of the brute creation, as mind is from matter—intellect from instinct; but it did not occur to him that in so doing, he was pleading



their right to an equal participation in his pastoral care—perhaps more than an equal one; inasmuch as many were shut out from the means of grace which others enjoyed; while their deplorable ignorance of God and themselves called loudly for instruction, without which they must die in their sins.

Mr. Clifford heard from Mr. Shirley the proceedings of Walter, with a smile of mingled good-nature and pity: “I fear, my young friend, you have chosen an unpromising field for your first experiments in moral government. The intention does high credit to your heart, and the attempt to your head; but do not be too sanguine: human nature is a stubborn article, too rough and rugged for such delicate fingers to work upon.”

“The worse it is, Sir, the more it needs improvement,” said Walter, smiling.

“True; but older and wiser heads than

yours or mine have long been canvassing the question, and never yet agreed as to the best means."

" Indeed, Sir, I think it clear that, excepting in colour and in clothes, any difference between me and a negro boy of my own age is produced by education : therefore I suppose that to be the surest method of improvement."

" Granting it, do you intend to do away with such distinction, and raise the African boy to your own level in society ? You may do so, as far as education goes : but then, Walter, will he be content with his lowly station as now ? will he not aspire to rank befitting his accomplishments ?"

Walter felt embarrassed, and fearful of appearing forward, but did not like to leave his opponent unanswered ; till, stealing a look at his father, he was encouraged by his nod and smile : he then replied, " We do not want to

educate them as gentlemen, Sir, but to give them just so much teaching as the children of English peasants enjoy at their village schools. I never heard that English farmers found their ploughs standing still, their grain uncut, or their sheep unshorn, because the labourer had learnt to read his Bible. But don't you think, Sir, that proper instructions teach people the duties of their stations, and that the learning my Papa's kindness has furnished me with, makes me better acquainted with my place as a son? I am sure it never tempted me to dispute his authority, much less to covet his seat in the family."

"And therefore," said Mr. Shirley, "it is my wish to ascertain whether the information Walter gives his pupils produces so good an effect upon them. I want to know whether their views of religion and of moral duty are correct; and this I hope to discover with your help."

With the ready politeness of a well-bred man, Mr. Clifford acquiesced; and on the following day, the school being assembled, Walter, with no little trepidation, prepared to receive his visitors, consisting of the whole family party and Mr. Clifford. Unapprized of the questions to be asked, he could only pray that a mouth and wisdom might be given to his little crew, and admonished them to be attentive, and consider well before they spoke.

It was an interesting scene : Martha Cook had spared no pains to render the school-room convenient, airy, and clean ; she had also bestowed some time in furnishing with neat dresses those children whose mothers were too careless to clothe them suitably. The white linen garments formed a pretty contrast to the black faces, arms, and feet, that marked their boundaries ; while sparkling eyes and pearly teeth adorned many a

countenance of negro beauty ; such beauty, at least, as formed the pride of an African mother, and could not fail to strike the eye of an European capable of discerning the charm that intelligence imparts to a face of any hue.

At his little table, his face flushed with emotion, and his manner restless with an anxiety not to be overcome, stood Walter : he received his guests respectfully, while the children, briskly rising from their low benches, made their obeisance with alacrity, evidently exulting in their orderly array, and the honour put upon them by the grand white people.

“ Upon my word, a most pleasing spectacle,” was the spontaneous remark of Mr. Clifford, whose kind feelings were ever awake to the appearance of happiness in others, or its reverse.

“ Children,” said Mr. Shirley, “ we wish to know what progress you have made in

your studies: this gentleman will ask you some questions; answer distinctly."

A hum of acquiescence arose: Walter had prohibited any unnecessary words, knowing the exceeding garrulity of the negroes, and fearing a noisy display.

"My little black boys and girls," said Mr. Clifford, "you have had great pains taken with you, and ought in return to take great pains with yourselves: can any of you read fluently?" The last word rather puzzled the scholars; but Walter replied by calling up his Testament class. "Four boys and two girls, I see: well, put them by, I shall begin with the most unlearned." The alphabet class stood up, consisting of all ages and sizes, lately admitted.

"It is not fair to question those poor things," observed Joseph; "they are but now commencing."

"Yet they have learned something of

their duty, though little of their book," said Walter.

"What is your duty, my lad?" said Mr. Clifford to a little fellow in this groupe.

"Me should love God, and fear him, and pray him, and keep him commandments. Him bid me honour me massa, and love me broder, and do honesty."

"Your spelling class, Walter," said Mr. Clifford; and the class arose.

"Well," he continued, addressing them, "let me hear a little of your spelling." This was executed to his satisfaction, with a few pardonable mistakes; and he then enquired whether they came readily to school. A clamour of "Iss, Massa"—"Oh, too much glad, Massa"—"We love school, make sabby book," ensued. When it subsided, Mr. Clifford again asked what good the sabby book did them? All looked inclined to reply, but none attempted it, till a little girl of ten years

old, pushed forward by their united, whispering efforts, modestly answered in the name of the rest—

“ We love school, Massa, 'cause book teach us. Some time go, we no school; den we play, we rob one anoder, we dirty, quarrel, fight, idle, say bad words. Den Massa Walter say, Come school, what for you no learn sabby book? Den we come school; we see letter, we spell, we write; we hear tell bad children go to bad place, good children go heben, see God and Jesus Christ. Den we pray God make we good, give new heart; we no fight, no steal; we learn love one anoder, help one anoder; 'cause God see we, write in a book all bad tings we do. Suppose we no come school, soon forget all dis; soon hate, steal, idle, no pray, no go heben. O Massa, school is very good ting!” A murmur of approbation from the sable party around announced that the

spokeswoman had expressed their sentiments ; and Walter saw in his father's countenance a gleam of satisfaction that rejoiced his heart.

“ I reserve my more particular queries for your principal class,” said Mr. Clifford ; “ and, by your leave, I shall be close with them. Boys and girls, what book do you study ? ”

“ The Testament, Massa.”

“ What is that ? ”

A stare of surprise at his supposed ignorance was followed by the ready reply, “ God's book, Massa ; tell how Jesus Christ came to de world to save us ; tell how he live, and how he die, and rise again. Tell us what we do to be save.”

“ And what must you do ? ”

“ Believe on de Lord Jesus Christ, and keep him commandments as he tell us.”

“ Does that book say any thing of black people ? ”



"No, Massa," said several.

"Yes, Massa," said Pompey.

"Indeed ! where ?"

"Was not dat black man Philip baptize, Massa ?"

"Oh, the Ethiopian ; yes, probably so ; but what do you learn from that ?"

"We learn, Massa, black men all same sinners like white men, must believe in Jesus Christ, and do his will, or dey no go to heaven."

"But if black men all the same as white ; should black men be servants, and white men masters ?"

Mr. Shirley evidently disapproved of this question, it appeared ill-judged ; however Pompey replied, "Some white men servants too ; God speak to both—speak to all servants."

"What does he say to them ?"

The leaves began to rustle ; but Pompey,

without opening his Testament repeated, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."

"Well answered; but what does the latter part mean?"

"It mean, Massa, dat if we say we love God, and no keep him command, we teachee men speak ill of him religion: dey say he let us do wrong tings; dey no learn fear him."

"Then you really think you are bound to do every day of your life, all the Bible bids you?"

"Yes, Massa."

"And you do so?"

"No, Massa; me have bad heart, tell me do wrong when God say do right; me sabby do good—do much bad: den me sorry much; pray Jesus Christ he wash away my sin, make me clean heart."

“ But then, if you be ever so wicked, you can pray the same thing, cannot you ?”

“ No, Massa; God no hear me; bad man no love pray. When me do bad willingly, me do great sin; God say, ‘ depart from me.’ Christian man is God’s son, cannot be devil’s servant, Massa.”

“ Sit down, my boy, and let some other answer; you are a prime scholar.”

Many other questions, and some very perplexing ones, he put to the class; and found how far a little real scriptural knowledge would go in furnishing suitable replies. Often indeed he went beyond the comprehension of the other young negroes; but never failed of a reply on a final appeal to Pompey. The impression was general among them, that they were bound to do their master’s work, as being the will of God, and to be content in their station, as that assigned by his wisdom and love; that to de-

vote the hours of leisure to learning what was good both for their minds and souls, was the proper employment for rational creatures; and that in proportion to the knowledge they acquired was their obligation to act accordingly. One little girl very forcibly repeated the text, "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free-man: likewise he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant;" and the inference she drew was, that while differing in station, they must, in good-will, be brethren.

"But suppose," said Mr. Clifford, "the freeman does not treat his servant well, but is severe, and loves him not, what then?"

"Den, Massa, we pray God change him heart; if he bad, dat no reason we bad too."

In conclusion, Walter asked permission for his little pupils to sing their evening

hymn; and sweet were the voices, though simple the skill, with which they poured forth an artless lay, written by their young teacher, in words adapted to their comprehension.

- “ We love the Lord : he came to save
Poor negro from the sinner’s grave ;
Though we be black, and mean, and vile,
Lord Jesus on poor negro smile.
- “ We love Him, and we must not break
The least command our Saviour spake ;
But pray him, by his precious blood,
To make us humble, faithful, good.
- “ Soon comes the night—the gay beams go,
And all is dark, above, below ;
But by and bye the sun will rise,
And sweetly shine in morning skies.
- “ Poor negro so be dark in face,
And dark the lot of negro race ;
But be our Saviour’s blessing given,
And we shall rise, to shine in heaven.
- “ There black and white, and bond and free,
The servants of one Lord shall be ;
And nothing shall be heard above,
But sounds of praise, and peace, and love.”

After a long visit, which, however, hardly appeared so to any of the party, they all returned home; Mr. Shirley expressing to the negro children, that he was very much pleased with their proficiency. Mr. Clifford, on their turning from the hut, said, "Could we find such teachers for every school as Walter, I would desire to see one on each estate. You have taught them admirably, my dear boy."

"Indeed, Sir, I taught them very little; I made them learn those passages of Scripture which seemed best adapted to their particular situation; and in fact, Sir, I found so many, that it convinced me the Gospel was meant for them also: wherever the Bible is read, with a due reverence for its authority, every one may find his own duty in it."

Mr. Clifford then apologised to Mr. Shirley for some of his questions; he said,

a wish to ascertain the impression made on their young minds overcame his scruples; and he must confess, the result had removed much prejudice, long harboured against the system.

“ Oh, Sir, how you rejoice me ! ” exclaimed Walter.

“ You deserve it, my love,” said his mother; “ you have set an example for us all to follow; and in future, your Papa not objecting, I will make a point of seeing the female part of your school more particularly attended to.”

“ Do so,” said her husband; “ but while I lay down every weapon of opposition, and join my efforts to Walter’s, I must still fear it will be a solitary, a singular instance, excepting as Cooper will keep us in countenance. Education will not become general among the slaves.”

“ No,” replied Mr. Clifford, “ for you cannot

possibly expect more than a consent from the Proprietors; not one in fifty would dream of an active part in such a scheme; and where are your funds to arise from? The individuals who would give their time to this work, can hardly give money too; and the Planters will expect to see the result of the system before they embark their capital in it. The plan, however well approved, will fail on the outset, unless a hearty co-operation should take place with the active and liberal spirits across the Atlantic; when we can draw for supplies on the open purse of old England, when her young people become Walters, and her elders view the cause in the light I am now almost tempted to do, then, indeed, schools will spring up and flourish among the African little ones, thus admitted to partake in the privileges of their more favoured fellow creatures."

Mr. Shirley had invited Mrs. Cooper for

the evening, and the subject was then more fully discussed. Mr. Clifford repeated his remarks on the impossibility of carrying forward instruction on a large scale with no other means than the friends of education in the islands possessed.

“I agree with you,” she replied, “but a strong feeling of commiseration is already excited in England for these neglected children, and there we have every prospect of a combined effort to smooth our path, and supply us with requisite assistance. We want teachers of judgment, patience, moderation, and the strictest principle; persons who, while striving to raise the African mind from the deep abasement it has hitherto grovelled in, will also guard against an undue elevation, and carefully nourish the feeling of submission to human authority, while instilling a dependence on one much higher and more absolute; we want books, we want clothing, par-

ticularly for the free children of colour, who must by no means be excluded from the benefits of our institution. We need a little fund for each school, whereon to draw in cases of emergency; and if thus assisted by England for a few years, I confidently predict that the result will awaken so deep a sense of utility in the minds of Proprietors, as to ensure their most cordial support; probably to the exclusion of foreign charity."

"My dear Mrs. Cooper," said Walter's mother, "I am told that my departed child had this cause much at heart; and had she lived to witness her father's acquiescence in it, she would have become an indefatigable labourer. I have not her youth, energy, or qualifications; yet I must not be idle. Let me have your advice and assistance; I may prove not altogether useless."

Mrs. Cooper's eyes sparkled with pleasure: "Be assured, my dear Madam, your aid

will be invaluable. It is so peculiarly the province of educated females to support, to superintend the process that rescues their own sex from ignorance and vice, that every thing may be hoped when the ladies of these islands begin to consider the object, and to bend their united efforts towards its attainment. In one island at least, a bright example is set, where a lady high in rank, distinguished by title, devotes the powers of an ardent, active mind, and the fascinations of every winning persuasive to the great work of disseminating useful knowledge among the outcast poor, the neglected offspring of slavery, and too often of vice. In her we have both a model and encouragement."

"Such a character is rare among us," observed Mr. Shirley.

"Rare, but not singular; we possess females of talent, activity, and perseverance, who, however they may fall short of this en-

thusiastically benevolent lady, in the ardour and decision of their measures, yet need but the approving smile of their lords, and a little encouragement from abroad, to prove, each in her own proper sphere, a successful imitator of this high and conspicuous luminary.

“If the Ladies take it up thus,” said Mr. Clifford to his host, “we shall soon be overborne by their eloquence and their achievements.”

“So much the better,” replied Mr. Shirley; “as woman was most active in bringing sin and misery among mankind, it becomes her to take the lead in driving them thence.”


“But man,” said Mrs. Cooper, “deliberately joined in the transgression; should he not also concur in promoting the application of a remedy? There is,” she proceeded, “a great bar on both sides the Atlantic to the right understanding of this subject. Many in England, glorying in their national and personal freedom, can conceive nothing as cal-

culated to ameliorate slavery; and in their eagerness to knock off the fetters, figuratively, from the body of the negro, forget or disregard that emancipation of mind, which can, in every situation, render him respectable, elevate his moral character, and inspire him with a hope that cannot fail; they think too much of his present short span of being; too little of the awful hereafter that awaits him: they place the proprietor and the negro in hostile ranks; and while that distinction continues, cannot imagine the possibility of mutual co-operation for mutual benefit in any point. On our part, the Proprietor is so accustomed to associate the darkness and degradation of his negro's mind with the subjection of his body, that in approaching towards a removal of the one, he involuntarily connects with it an alienation of his rights to the other. He has always seen African slaves ignorant and vicious, so that colour and situation be-

come insensibly identified with temper and character. This is an error rooted in long habit, become second nature ; and we cannot expect it to yield to the first plea we bring forward on the side of impartial reason. We must not wonder that even permission to make the experiment from our own resources is sometimes withheld ; much less can we hope for the Planter's active co-operation. Some, indeed, like my Alfred, may view the question with the benign eye of disinterested philanthropy, and be willing to hazard a little on the mere probability of essentially benefiting their fellow creatures. Others, with the enterprizing spirit of mercantile speculation, may readily embark a trifling capital, on calculating the vast profit that must accrue to themselves in exchanging a stubborn, indolent, vicious gang of slaves, for a quiet, orderly, industrious crew, ashamed by rational instruction from their evil ways, and yielding a well-

principled submission to authority. No man of common reason but would prefer to command civilized beings rather than savages; and this is the alternative we would place before the Proprietor. Still neither philanthropy nor enterprize will generally overcome the prejudices of habit; and we must not expect an universal acquiescence till time shall bring our prognostications to the proof. At present we look to generous England for a helping hand."

"England!" said Mr. Clifford, in a thoughtful tone, "my own native England; when was her ear closed to the supplication of want, or her hand withdrawn from the work of beneficence? You have led me very forcibly to contrast the situation of her intelligent, instructed race, with the forlorn state of these African little ones; and I could not but think, had your school been transported into one of her populous hamlets, many a sweet



eye had been suffused with tears of pleasing interest, and many a coin found its way into your collection. Yes, dear England; no one will deny thee the characteristic of real benevolence.

‘Thou hast an eye for pity, and a hand,
Open as day, to melting charity.

Call on England, she will not disappoint your hope.”

“It is our purpose so to do,” answered Mrs. Cooper. “Various religious Societies have contributed bountifully to our school funds, in these islands, and their agents laboured in the work; but we want to rouse the females of the West Indies to emulate their Transatlantic sisters in personal activity, and we want these latter to hail them with the voice of approval and encouragement. Oh, it is sweet to think, that while we are awakening to our duty here, a little band, uniting their feeble efforts amid much opposi-

tion and innumerable difficulties, ladies of princely rank, of abundant fortune, of shining talent, of high acquirements, are assembling in distant England, to aid us with their money, their counsel, and their prayers—prayers that cannot fail of an ultimate accomplishment, for God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Walter had listened to this conversation with feelings as blissful as human nature is capable of experiencing; intently watching his father's countenance, he could not detect one passing shade of dissatisfaction or uncertainty, but beheld the happy composure of a man, who has at length settled into a fixed determination to do right. Their eyes now met; and the softening expression of approving love that beamed from Mr. Shirley's, overflowed Walter's heart with joy. “Now do tell me, dear Papa,” he said, smiling, “of

all the little negroes on your plantation, upon whom do you look as the most attached and willing slaves?"

"Certainly, as you wish me to acknowledge, the lads and lasses with whom I had an interview in your school-room."

"Yes, Papa: they know it is to your indulgence they are indebted for the advantages they so highly prize: and had you seen the looks, and heard the remarks that I did, you, and Mamma, and all, would have been repaid for your condescension, in interesting yourselves so far."

"I believe, Walter, the benefit is mutual. I certainly never looked upon sable skins with so much real satisfaction."

"The luxury of doing good," observed Mrs. Cooper, "is one of the richest that man can enjoy. Let the negro see that his master can feel solicitude for his improvement and happiness, while the master is conscious that

he stands in the character of a benefactor before his negro, and a mutual complacency will ensue, inexpressibly advantageous to both parties."

"It will lead to a saving of whip-cord, at any rate," said Henry; "but, Uncle, William is wishing to speak, and wants courage; do break the ice for him."

"What would you say, William? speak without fear;" said Mr. Shirley.

"I may do that, Sir; but not without shame. When I consider how much pain I have caused you, by misconduct that you know of, and how many wicked things I have succeeded in concealing from you, and when I look at Walter, and compare with him, I could wish the horse had finished his mischievous pranks, only for the good that has sprung out of Pompey's generosity, and for the hope I have of being less unfit for such a summons in future. I have not said any



thing before, Papa, because I was afraid my good resolutions would soon come to nothing ; but Henry and I have talked a great deal together ; we are both very faulty ; we both want correction ; and we beg of you to advise us, to watch over us, and punish us severely when we do wrong in future, particularly where the negroes are concerned."

"My dear boys," said Mr. Shirley, his eyes glistening as he spoke, "I will, with God's help, become more actively your friend than hitherto. I must set you an example, William, in the situation to which you will one day succeed : we will seek, at the highest source, direction through life ; and bear in mind the day when all of us, and *all dependant on us*, shall together appear at the bar of final judgment. Let us never forget, from how small a beginning the greatest, the most extensive good may result. While observing Walter's quiet steady PERSEVERANCE, in

his limited sphere of usefulness, I was led to consider deeply the motives that could stimulate so young a boy to a work so arduous, and from the motives, I went on to investigate the end of his labours. Hence I date the progress of conviction in my own mind; and hundreds may soon reap the benefit of his unostentatious benevolence. Pompey's family are advanced to a very comfortable and advantageous post, and he shall receive a solid education; he may one day be a valuable and confidential servant to some of us. We will divide the schools: you, Walter, continue to superintend the boys, and your Mamma will, I am sure, give attention to that of the girls. Thanks, Mrs. Cooper, for your candid advice and assistance: we want nothing but Alfred's arrival, to form quite a little phalanx of champions in defence of our system. What say you, Mr. Clifford, will you give us battle?"

"Not I, indeed; I must make my escape before you enlist me under the same banners."

"You will not escape, Sir," said Walter; "I know you are a convert in your heart."

"Well, if that be so, you will dismiss me on friendly terms; and when I make up my next despatches for England, I, as a good ally, will strenuously plead your cause, and appeal to my fair countrywomen, whether the little ones of Africa shall perish for lack of knowledge, while they have means to bid them learn and live?"

Thou, fair England, art a queen,
On thy wave-girt island throne,
Rejoicing o'er a brilliant scene,
Resplendent, and alone;
As glows in kindred gold the star,
Of Hesperus, sole, bright, and far.

There are fields beyond thy ken,
Where the day-beams have not broke,
Where ignorance, in darksome den,
Makes fast his leaden yoke;

Where, to the prostrate soul is given
Nor peace on earth, nor hope in heaven.

Wilt thou revel in the light
That is floating round thy brow,
Nor glance amid those realms of night
One sparkle of its glow ?
Vicerent of a cloudless sun,
By thee be this achievement won !

Be the sullen gloom dispersed,
And the mental chain unbound,
Till, in the germ of promise nursed,
The tree of life be found ;
And heaven's benignant lustre play
Athwart the bondman's toilsome way.

'Twere a jewel to outshine
Half thy diadem of pride ;
Sweet England, be the trophy thine !
Disperse thy bounty wide,
Till on the deepening current roll
Life, light, and joy, to Afric's soul.

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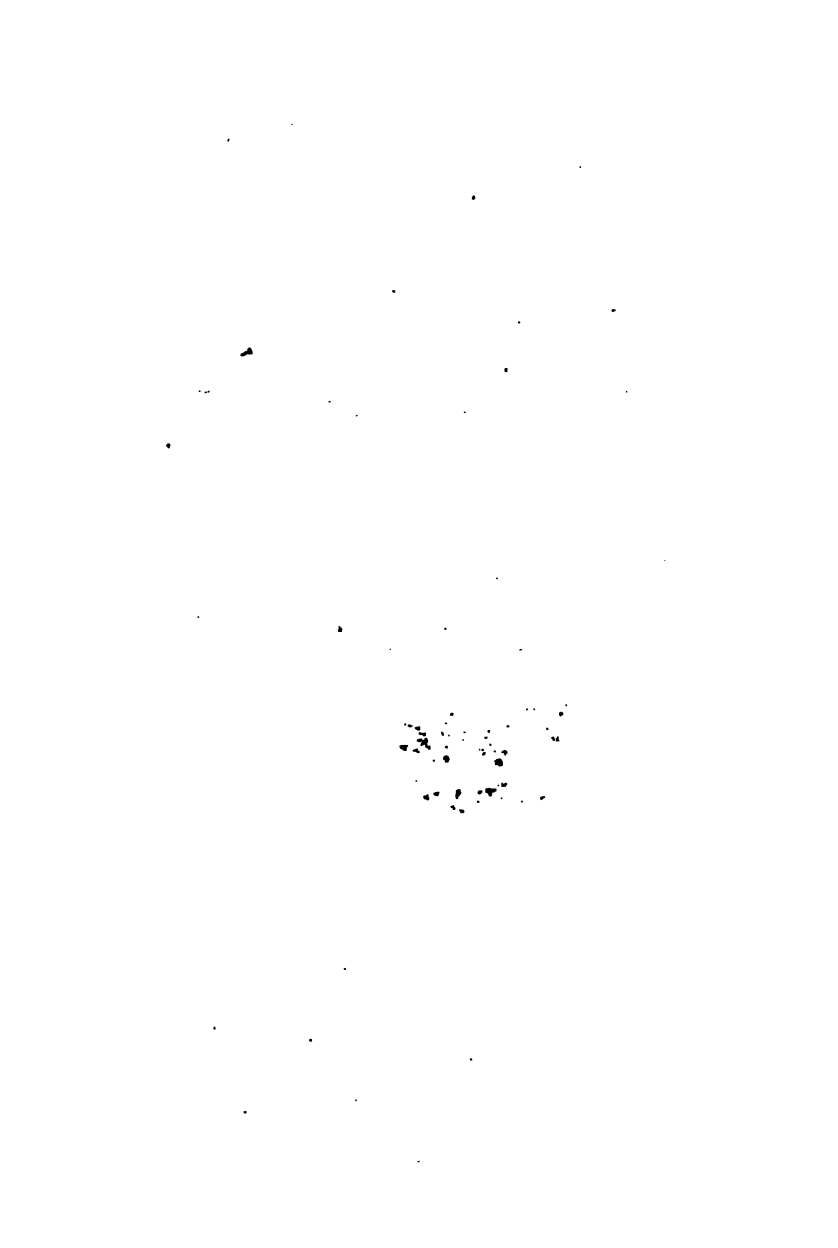
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